

ous obstacles to overcome in adjusting to his life in this country, but he was immediately sought after. No matter his trouble with the spoken and written language; one look at his work and people knew he was an accomplished mason. Much of his work is still in existence. When you look at it, you can see the quality of the work and the skill that went into building; the attention to detail comes through even in the photo. It is as timeless and irreplaceable as the work of every good tradesperson. After skipping one generation, I look around and see a brother in the masonry business and I'm an architect; both of us get very dirty in our jobs and wouldn't have it any other way. I'm glad there is a connection across the generations there. We're proud of the work we do; we're proud of the connection.

The value of skilled trades- and craftspeople cannot be overlooked. They are the essence of preservation, they are the front line. Without skilled, creative, and thinking building trade specialists it doesn't matter what the intent of the managers or designers is; nothing would be achieved. Several articles that follow look at the societal worth we have placed on saving cultural places and the seeming inequity of value placed on the workers; this is a very big concern. We are

hoping this CRM will begin a dialogue. There are many questions here which need to be explored, many questions left open for discussion and debate. Preserving cultural resources remains a primary element and mission of the National Park Service. As Director Stanton says, "We expect to hear more from everyone involved."

The Preservation Trades Workshop has provided a venue for networking and community building, for demonstrating and learning from the talented artisans, and skilled crafts- and tradespeople who work with traditional building methods. One of our greatest achievements will be the future generations who have increased knowledge and the commitment and skills to conserve our national heritage. Is there a better way to learn?

Spend some time exploring this CRM. Find the common ground. Discover the connections between head and hand. Participate in the future!

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H. Thomas McGrath, Jr.

Qualification Standards for the Trades?

This past June, the National Park Service issued a proposal for review and comment to substantially revise the Secretary of the Interior's Historic Preservation Professional Qualification Standards. The new proposed standards address 13 professional fields related to historic preservation. Each of these professional disciplines are specifically mentioned in the National Historic Preservation Act. Additionally, the 13 disciplines are directly associated with an academic degree and, therefore, are defined as "professional." These new proposed preservation standards do not address the qualifications of the "preservation technicians" or preservation tradespeople who perform the work of applying the preservation treatments to our historic buildings. The proposed National Park Service standards offer a strict interpretation of the intent of Congress with respect to qualification standards only for professionals. I feel strongly that there

should also be qualification standards for the preservation trades. Should the preservation community support a system that allows anyone who can pick up a hammer, trowel, or paintbrush show up at the job site to perform the labor of preservation, as long as they are supervised by a qualified professional? The intention of the Historic Preservation Act is currently being interpreted for professionals only because the preservation trades are not specifically identified in the legislation. The question, therefore, to ask is: "has the time come for the preservation industry to address the lack of qualification standards for the trades?"

It is my firm belief that the development and application of journey-level qualification standards for the preservation trades should be on a par with the application of the proposed professional qualification standards. They should support progress toward gaining the respect that people on the job who do the labor of historic preservation now

deserve. However, the need for qualification standards for the preservation trades extends far beyond workplace respect. Qualification standards for preservation professionals without a reciprocal standard for the preservation trades continues and perpetuates a construction site environment where continual close professional supervision of the trade worker is a requirement and we request only the “headless hand” from the craftsman. Lacking common definition and acceptance of the training, experience, and standards by which to measure preservation technicians in their knowledge, skill, and abilities, technicians will continue their distance from the preservation community. Funding, recognition, respect, awards, training, and representation within the field of historic preservation for the trades now occurs intermittently or on an invited basis. When and if the preservation trades organize their own community and identify their special contributions to the

preservation field, the trades should begin to get space at the table.

Much has been written in the last several years about our nation’s failure to develop secondary education programs or apprenticeships that adequately train our technicians and tradespeople. It has been widely recognized that the focus of the current American

educational system has been on attainment of an academic education, and not necessarily on skills learning. For the past few generations, our high schools have relegated skills learning to shop, automotive, and home economics classes where few skills are learned that translate to jobs in the real world of work. While countries such as Germany are running technical apprenticeship programs that prepare students for jobs in industry, this country has been preparing youth—not bound for college—for work flipping burgers. In the past few years, some progress has been made toward developing entry-level training programs that develop skills directly related to technical trades in industry. For the building trades, older tradespeople learned their skill through trade unions or on the job from experienced mechanics. Unfortunately, many of the trade skills now learned on the job are inappropriate for preservation work and are very hard for mechanics to correct later in their careers. The installation skills of manufactured building components associated

with modern commercial and residential buildings are unrelated to the traditional carpentry or masonry skills of constructing architectural elements and features. These are the trade skills necessary to preserve and maintain our historic buildings. Contemporary building techniques are similar to component assembly and are highly dependent on mechanical tools; hand skills used for the artistic crafting of wood and masonry, or the layering of paint have been replaced by skills that emphasize speed and production. Ironically, at the same time traditional sources for craft training seem to have disappeared from industry, the requirement for specialist technicians in the preservation trades has increased. The journey-level skills of the contemporary carpenter, painter, or mason are not always directly transferable to the specialized skill requirements of the preservation field.

If we accept that preservation work requires different and specialized trade skills from those used in contemporary construction, it should follow that we can define those competencies common to the preservation trades. Preservation professionals have recognized for more than a decade their professional skills were distinct from their professional peers who work outside of the field. It is now time for the construction trades to reflect the same form of recognition for those special skills required and necessary when working on historic structures. The evolution of distinct preservation trade carpenters, masons, and painters from their journey-level counterparts within the contemporary construction field should be encouraged. Therefore, I propose the answer to the challenge of the emerging preservation trades community is that reciprocal standards to the Professional Qualification Standards are now necessary and are desirable.

I propose that the historic preservation movement in America would be strengthened economically and creatively by moving toward an approach that shares the responsibility at the preservation job site between the professional and tradesperson. The goal should be to place trust with decision making of the qualified tradesperson. The economics of preservation are improved when there is less reliance on detailed specifications and excessive plans for simple preservation tasks. Most preservation professionals would prefer not to be required to provide close professional supervision of labor at our preservation work sites given the assurance that qualified preservation tradespeople are performing the work. Furthermore, the quality of the application of preservation treatments should improve when we foster and reward a preservation industry that pro-



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vides fully trained and qualified preservation tradespeople at our job sites.

At a talk presented to a symposium titled "The State of Craftsmanship," held in Baltimore in 1996, I outlined some thoughts on what I called a Code of Practice for the preservation trades. Since then, the original eight points made in that presentation have been modified. The following listing of these eight proposed competencies might suggest one approach for developing qualifications for the skill training, historic trade experience, and products and activities that demonstrate journey-level qualification in the preservation trades:

- The preservation tradesperson shall demonstrate journey-level skill in his/her selected trade as defined by traditional hand tool skills and methods. The preservation tradesperson shall have a minimum of three years full-time journey-level trade experience that demonstrates the knowledge and ability to apply those craft skills appropriately to a wide range of historic resource types and examples.
- The preservation tradesperson shall demonstrate knowledge of the field of historic preservation. He/she shall have a working knowledge of historic preservation laws, regulations, philosophy, and practices as they apply to their specific trade.
- The preservation tradesperson shall have ability to demonstrate an awareness that work in the field of historic preservation is an interdisciplinary process. There are normally many disciplines involved in preservation project work and the trades technician shall demonstrate the ability to know when his/her work could have an adverse effect on a resource. The tradesperson shall demonstrate the knowledge to know when to stop work and seek guidance or consultation from a preservation professional.
- The preservation tradesperson shall demonstrate the skill and ability to document his/her own contributions to a preservation project. The trades technician shall demonstrate knowledge of the methods of documentation and the skill to provide appropriate documentation for his/her work when the tasks are completed.
- The preservation tradesperson shall have the ability to demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of sets of treatments and apply appropriate treatments as defined by the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation*. The work of the preservation technician shall reflect the hierarchy of preferred treatments that start with protecting and maintaining building features and then moves through repair treatment alternatives to

replacement in-kind treatments. The preservation trades technician shall demonstrate the knowledge and ability to avoid irreversible damage that could result in diminishing the historic character of a structure.

- The historic preservation tradesperson shall demonstrate the ability to identify, evaluate, and document both contemporary and historic building materials, methods, and construction techniques.
- The preservation tradesperson shall demonstrate knowledge and skill in recognizing potential life safety hazards common to historic resources and preservation projects. The preservation trades technician shall demonstrate the ability to mitigate hazards in the course of his/her work.
- The preservation craftsman shall demonstrate the knowledge and ability to apply and utilize sustainable practices in the execution of his/her preservation tradeswork.
- A master tradesperson shall demonstrate the knowledge, skill, and technical proficiency in the trade, as well as the knowledge in the business administration of the trade and laws relating to construction, occupational safety, historic preservation, as well as teaching skills in the trade. A person who successfully demonstrates master level competency and experience (master craftsman) is thus also certified to train apprentices.

There are models to consider when discussing how to support the renaissance of the preservation trades in America. Certainly, the organization of the crafts and trades in Germany offers one approach worth studying. In Germany, Chambers of Crafts and Trades are organized as guilds at the town and country level and are responsible for vocational training and continuing education. The German guilds have been developed out of a rich tradition that dates back to the Middle Ages. A critical component of the German system is vocational certification. If we want to ensure that our historic buildings are preserved to the very highest standards, the preservation community needs to pay as much attention to the training, development, and economic opportunities for qualified preservation tradespeople as we are now doing for the preservation professionals.

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